

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 10387 201111Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OIC-02 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 COME-00

HA-05 /100 W

-----001289 201250Z /50

R 201010Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7439

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 10387

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEAN, RP

SUBJECT: U.S.-ASEAN DIALOGUE

REF: BANGKOK 17243

1. SUMMARY. REPORTING ON THE ASEAN MINISTERIAL, FONMIN ROMULO TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT ONLY PHILIPPINES AND SINGAPORE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO HAVING BOTH FOREIGN AND ECON MINISTERIAL REPS AT UPCOMING WASHINGTON MEETING. THAIS AND INDONESIANS CONTINUE TO HAVE RESERVATIONS, SENSING THAT USG IS SEEKING TO MANIPULATE ASEAN FOR PROPAGANDA PURPOSES. ROMULO, ON OTHER HAND, ARGUED FOR NEED FOR ASEAN TO PROJECT CLEARER PICTURE OF ITS GOALS TO U.S. CONGRESS. JAPANESE FONMIN SONODA RENEWED FUKUDA'S PROMISES BUT ASKED FOR ASEAN PATIENCE IN THIS REGARD. SONODA PLEDGED SUPPORT FOR BOTH STABEX AND COMMON FUND. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 MANILA 10387 201111Z

2. FONMIN ROMULO REVIEWED 11TH ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR JUNE 20.

3. LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION--ONLY MANILA AND SINGAPORE WERE PREPARED TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO HAVING BOTH FOREIGN AND ECON MINISTERIAL REPRESENTATION IN AUGUST WASHINGTON MEETING. BOTH INDONESIAN AND THAI FONMINS

CONTINUED TO ENTERTAIN RESERVATIONS, CLAIMING THEY SENSED USG IS ATTEMPTING "TO MANIPULATE ASEAN FOR PURPOSES OF AMERICAN PROPAGANDA." THEY CARPED ABOUT THE PROPOSED U.S. AGENDA AND SAID THEY PREFER TO STICK TO WHAT ASEAN MINISTERS HAVE ALREADY PROPOSED. ROMULO SAID HE HAD ARGUED HIMSELF HOARSE THAT ASEAN NEEDED TO PROJECT A CLEARER IMAGE OF ITS PURPOSES AND ITS GOALS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND CONGRESS. WHILE ASEAN HAD OVER THE YEARS GAINED A GOOD UNDERSTANDING IN THE AMERICAN EXECUTIVE, IT WAS STILL AN UNKNOWN INSTITUTION FOR BOTH U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESS, WITHOUT WHOSE SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATION WOULD NOT WIN SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL BACKING. THE THAI FONMIN HAD SAID BLUNTLY THAT WHOMEVER HIS GOVERNMENT FINALLY DECIDED TO SEND DID NOT WANT TO GO TO WASHINGTON TO HEAR LECTURES FROM SECRETARIES VANCE AND BLUMENTHAL BUT WANTED A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF ASEAN ECONOMIC PROJECTS. INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS HAD BEEN MADE BY INDONESIAN, MALAYSIAN AND THAI REPRESENTATIVES ABOUT THE U.S. DOWNGRADING OF ASEAN SYMBOLIZED BY OUR CHOICE OF UNDER SECRETARY COOPER AS HEAD OF USDEL TO FIRST U.S. ASEAN MEETING. THIS THEY CONTRASTED TO THE ATTENDANCE OF THE AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALAND AND JAPANESE PRIME MINISTERS AT THE ASEAN SUMMIT--EARLIER AND THE FACT THAT JAPAN HAD SENT FONMIN SONODA TO THE PATTAYA CONFERENCE THIS YEAR. ROMULO SAID HE HAD COUNTERED THIS CRITICISM, ASSERTING THE FIRST U.S.-ASEAN MEETING HAD BEEN A SUCCESS. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MANILA 10387 201111Z

4. SONODA PARTICIPATION--ROMULO SAID FONMIN SONODA HAD ASKED FOR MORE PATIENCE FROM THE ASEAN NATIONS OVER THEIR REQUESTS OF JAPAN. HE PLEDGED THAT FUKUDA'S PROMISES WOULD BE CARRIED OUT, BUT THIS WOULD TAKE A LITTLE MORE TIME. ASKED IF SONODA GOT INTO ANY SPECIFICS IN THE CLOSED SESSION, ROMULO REPLIED THAT SONODA PLEDGED JAPAN'S SUPPORT FOR BOTH STABEX AND THE COMMON FUND AND WOULD DO ALL POSSIBLE TO HELP ASEAN AT THE BONN SUMMIT. HE HAD CAUTIONED SONODA THAT JAPAN MUST AVOID PROTECTIONISM, AND JAPANESE HAD REPLIED THAT THEY WERE WORKING ON THIS PROBLEM. ROMULA ADVISED THAT SONODA PLANS VISIT MANILA IN LATE JULY AFTER HIS VISITS TO AUSTRALIA AND PEKING.

5. REFUGEES--ROMULO SAID HE HAD MADE PUBLIC STATEMENT ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE WORLD COMMUNITY TO PULL TOGETHER AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT BECAUSE HE AND HIS ASEAN FONMIN COLLEAGUES FORESAW NO EARLY DIMINISHMENT IN THE REFUGEE FLOW AND INDEED A PROBABLE INCREASE IN THEIR NUMBERS. THEIR SITUATION HAD BEEN CREATED AS A RESULT OF A WAR, WHICH WAS NOT OF ASEAN'S

MAKING AND AS REFUGEE NUMBERS GROW AND THEY SENSE THEIR
SITUATION BECOMING DESPERATE, THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION
COULD WITNESS A PROBLEM EVERY BIT AS EXPLOSIVE AS THAT
WHICH HAS GROWN OUT OF THE PALISTINIAN PROBLEM. MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MANILA10387
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780256-0974
Format: TEL
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780640/aaaabitp.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c74ec785-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BANGKOK 17243
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2285970
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S.-ASEAN DIALOGUE
TAGS: PORG, EGEN, RP, SN, ASEAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c74ec785-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014